Some Forgotten Eighteenth Century Beauties

BRIEF is beauty's reign. If you would know how brief, stroll through one of those galleries in which hang the portraits of the belles of a past generation. The painter's art cannot immortalize their charm. Gone from the scenes of their triumphs, soon even their names are forgotten, and faces that once stirred a continent for good or evil interest only the passing critic, to whom they are merely the forms through which some master of the brush conveys his message to the world of art.

Among the wealth of pictures from the old world gathered to the United States in recent years are many portraits of fair dames who by right of loveliness once commanded universal homage, unlimited power or wealth beside which that of the most opulent multimillionaire seems paltry. These may be seen on the walls of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, the Corcoran gallery in Washington or the Public library in Boston, as well as in many other American collections. They are unnoted, unrecognized, these beauties of a bygone day. Visitors care only for those canvases that have a story to tell or bear the name of some famous artist and pass with an indifferent stare portraits behind which lies many a forgotten world romance.

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Very few of those who glance at Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait of Lady Ellenborough in the Metropolitan museum, New York, are aware that the woman whom it depicts was one of the most beautiful and most powerful women of her time. In the same art gallery is another portrait of a beauty once famous. The canvas shows a young woman dressed in white, with a leopard skin knotted about her shoulders and a bow and arrow in her hand. She is the Princess de Conde, Charlotte Godefriede Elisabeth de Rohan-Soubise, born in 1737, when Louis XV. ruled France and Mme. de Pompadour was a young girl fifteen years of age with ambitious thoughts in her pretty head. The De Rohans were not a particularly scrupulous race, and her father, the Prince de Rohan-Soubise, who flattered the petticoated powers behind the throne, had the benefit of De Pompadour's influence in making brilliant matches for his children. Charlotte Elisabeth, who was as lovely in mind and character as she was in face and form, was married in 1753 to Prince Louis Joseph de Bourbon-Conde, the great-grandson of a hero of France and the heir to its richest and proudest title. The palace of the Condes at Chantilly was filled with almost priceless art treasures, and when the Grand Duke Paul of Russia was entertained there early in the reign of Louis XVI. he described it as more magnificent than the royal abode. The Condes never forgot that they had royal blood in their veins and were so much more popular than the reigning house that doubtless, as the sovereigns of France declined in favor, they may have dreamed of supplanting them upon the throne. The young princess died in the twenty-third year of her age, leaving a son, Louis Joseph Henri, who was to be the last and the most unfortunate of the brilliant house of Conde.

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Marie Antoinette, who came to France ten years after the Princess of Conde's death, took a fancy to this portrait, which was in the best style of the great Nattier, and added it to her private collection at Trianon, where it was given a place of honor on the walls of the music room. There it hung until the queen presented it to the family of the Count du Montdesir, whence it came by devious ways to the walls of the New York museum.

Jean Marc Nattier, French court painter of the earlier half of the eighteenth century, painted most of the highborn belles of his time and country. He was to France what Reynolds, Gainsborough and Lawrence were to England. The eighteenth century may be said to have been the era of beauty, for during no other period have there been so many women famous for beauty or the power which beauty gave them. Early in the century Mme. de Maintenon occupied a throne through the spell her beauty cast over the heart of the aged Louis XIV. When Louis XV. succeeded his grandfather, in 1715, a new series of beauties, most of them as frail as they were fair, fascinated the French court. Queens of France in all but name, probably the Marquise de Pompadour and the Countess du Barry exercised greater power than any other women of their time.

Mme. Necker, wife of the director general of finance and mother of the famous Mme. de Stael, was a celebrated beauty in her day. She was the one and only love of the historian Gibbon. The Marquise du Deffand, the friend of Voltaire, presents a remarkable example of retributive justice. In spite of her intellect, she was all her life a heartless coquette, but when seventy years of age became the victim of a hopeless passion for young Horace Walpole, who described her as "a merry old woman who says smart things that are repeated wherever I go." Mlle. de l'Espinasse, who was at one time the amanuensis and companion of the Marquise du Deffand, is supposed to have been the original from which Mrs. Humphry Ward drew her central character in "Lady Rose's Daughter." The Countess Stephanie Felicite de Genlis, another famous belle, was the daughter of a poor but noble family. She supported herself and her mother with her music until she married the rich Count de Genlis. A lovely creature with light brown hair, black eyes and piquant features, clever and accomplished, she captivated the dissolute Duke de Chartres, whose wife was herself one of the beauties of the day. Marie Antoinette regarded De Genlis as a dangerous, intriguing woman. Indeed the attitude of the queen, herself a very handsome woman, was hostile to the clever beauties of her reign. Even Mme. Necker received many a snub, although the good offices of her husband were so valuable to the royal family. One reason for the queen's aversion to Mme. de Genlis was because she had made a match between her good looking aunt, Mme. de Montesson, and the aged Duke d'Orleans, the king's relative. Mme. de Genlis' great rival was Mme. de Stael, who was not beautiful, but fascinating. Her salon surpassed that of all competitors, for she cleverly surrounded herself with such beauties as Mme. Recamier, Mme. la Fayette and others—women who were not only lovely, but respected. A beauty of the time whose salon almost equaled in popularity those of Mme. de Genlis and Mme de Stael was the fascinating Marquise Sophie de Condorcet, wife of a scientist and enthusiast for popular government.

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Of the beauties of the French Revolution Mme. Roland is the most renowned. Like the unfortunate Charlotte Corday, she was as lovely as she was patriotic. Mme. Julie Recamier was the belle of both the revolutionary and the Napoleonic eras. The great Bonaparte himself offered her his homage, while his brother Lucien entertained a hopeless passion for her. When she was sixty years of age her beauty was still unfaded, like that of Ninon de l'Enclos, who was lovely at eighty. Neither of these women seems to have been very deeply moved by any one or anything, which may have been the secret of their perfect features at an age when other women's faces are wrinkled and shriveled.

In England during the eighteenth century there were many fair women, but neither beauty nor cleverness elevated them as it did in France. Sarah, duchess of Marlborough, was handsome, but her influence was due to intriguing rather than charm. The Duchess of Marlborough knew the attraction of beauty and tried to surround herself with lovely women. To her salon at St. James came, among others, the young Lady Mary, the daughter of the Earl of Kingston, who became celebrated in English society and literature as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Her charms made such an impression that when eight years old she became the favorite toast of the celebrated Kit Kat club. When Caroline of Anspach, wife of George II., made up her court she surrounded herself with the prettiest girls of the day. Among these were the three Marys—"lovely Molly Leppell," afterward Lady Hervey; Mary Bellenden, who married Colonel Campbell, afterward Duke of Argyll, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. The spot in the garden in which on pleasant days these three graces strolled with their attendent swains is still pointed out at Richmond as "Maid's Row." The Countess of Bessborough, sister of Georgiana, duchess of Devonshire, was another reigning toast. The countess' daughter, Lady Caroline Lamb, who married Lord Melbourne, served as the original for Lady Kitty in Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Marriage of William Ashe."

The lovely Gunnings, one of whom became Duchess of Hamilton and Argyll and the other Countess of Coventry, were perhaps the most notable English beauties of their day. Georgiana, duchess of Devonshire, a power in eighteenth century politics, will not be forgotten so long as Sir Joshua Reynolds' portrait of her survives. There was also the matchless Sarah Siddons, unsurpassed in beauty as in her histrionic art. The rivals of her Grace of Devonshire—the Duchess of Gordon—popularly called Jenny of Monteith, and the Marchioness of Salisbury, each had her court of admirers. "The Maid of Bath," the fair singer, Miss Eliza Ann Linley, who became the wife of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, was another famous belle. Anne Conway, the Honorable Mrs. Damer, was noted as much for her beauty as for her genius in sculpture. Poor cynical old Horace Walpole gave to her the admiration of his declining years and bequeathed to her a substantial fortune in his home, Strawberry Hill.

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Lovely and unfortunate, the charming Fitzherbert appeals to the chivalry of an age when kings are not so highly thought of as when George IV. inveigled her into a secret marriage. In spite of the fact that the first gentleman of Europe, in his gentlemanly way, denied the marriage and authorized Fox publicly to repudiate it in the house of commons, the reputation of this beautiful woman was finally cleared by the opening of the documents, letters, etc., which were by royal command after her death locked up in the Bank of England and kept there until King Edward magnanimously ordered that they should be made public. Of course under English law Mrs. Fitzherbert could never have been queen of England, but it is interesting to know that in the eighteenth century three women—the Empress Catherine, wife of Peter the Great; Mme. de Maintenon, wife of Louis XIV., and Mrs. Maria Anne Smythe Fitzherbert, wife of George IV.—although but of the people themselves, by their beauty raised themselves to be the equal in power and position of any royal woman of the ancient dynasties.

ALICIA MEREDITH.

PRINCESS DE CONDE AS DIANA.—AFTER THE ORIGINAL, BY NATTIER, IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.

The Woman Who Summers by the Sea

I CONFESS my liking for big hotels has vanished.

One doesn't seem to meet really "nice" people at them any more. Nowadays we are getting so English that we must all have our country places, and if we don't have one we hire a cottage for a month or so and invite our friends down for week ends. This keeps us from unutterable loneliness and at the same time allows us to pay back some of our winter obligations.

The up to date woman is too fond of her comfort not to have her own private veranda, heaped up with cushions and fancy fixings. She has no mind to carry on her flirtations within earshot of the Embroiderers' league, and she won't eat canned food.

For all of these reasons and a few more it can be easily seen why the big summer hotel has no attractions for her.

Her own private veranda.

Probably there isn't a hotel in the land where the suffering guest doesn't have to eat canned things more or less, and, then, after a dinner where the vegetables have been "French" string beans and other "tinny" condiments, the unfortunate may go down the road a bit and stare at some impoverished "native's" vegetable garden overgrown thick with things it makes my mouth water even to write about, some of which, to aggravate matters, seem actually to be going to seed for lack of some one to eat them.

Paying For What?

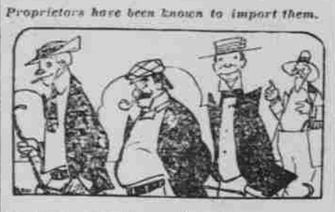
And the guest of the big hotel is paying anywhere from $30 to $100 a week for the privilege of being herded with a lot of undesirable people, fed any old thing and charged extra for all the proprietor's ingenuity can contrive.

I say "undesirable people" with reason, for who are half the folk one meets at summer hotels? No one really knows, and it is well they keep their identity secret. I could tell you many a story of undesirable acquaintances in vacation time, when appearances were all one had to go by, and the return to town proved a startling revelation.

There is a species of woman who will always go to a summer hotel. I fancy she is the main reason why such institutions keep alive! I mean the mother of no particular social position with marriageable daughters. Having little or no chance during the winter months to marry them off she trusts to luck or love at first sight among the guests where they stop in hot weather.

Unfortunately the young man is becoming a scarce article in summer hotels. Proprietors have been known to import them specially from town and give them room and board free in order

Proprietors have been known to import them.



to keep marriage scheming mammas and old maids contented and happy.

Experience has shown that no kicks will be made about the most awful food if eligible young men are around.

So the wise proprietor who charges the youths nothing or next to nothing for their board evens things up after this fashion.

Not Made In Heaven.

And are matches ever made in this way? Sometimes, when the girl has money. For the young men who hang around the piazzas and flirt rarely have a sou of their own. If they had they would be staying at private houses. Very few millionaires are allowed to run around loose and unchaperoned, I can tell you. There are several eligibles at the hotel where I am staying, but, bless your heart, they are in such demand at the different cottages for dinner, bridge, etc., not to speak of automobile and yachting trips to Newport, that no one but the night clerk ever sees them as they wend their weary way to their rooms to snatch the remainder of the night's sleep.

Occasionally one gets a glimpse of them sitting down to a late breakfast, and the pretty girl who is down here with her mother doesn't waste any more of her good evening clothes around the hotel, but blossoms forth in the most exquisite of costumes every morning. She comes down late to breakfast in the palest of pink and the most delicate of blues. It must be a raging headache, I'm sure, that can remain indifferent to such a picture.

Down by the Sea.

On the bathing beach this same girl is a dream also, for this is her other chance. Every one meets there, cottagers and hotel people alike, so she wears distracting silk bathing suits, with little handkerchief caps to match. One of them is in the new shade of cobalt blue (between Alice and turquoise), embroidered with black and white in a panel effect down the front and back. The stockings are of silk to match, and the cap is of the same silk with three points, each tipped with a tiny white tassel and tied handkerchief fashion.

She divides the attention with the gay young widow who wears the checked silk bathing suit with green touches.

The girl is so pretty and so industrious about cultivating just the right people that it does seem as if her efforts should be crowned with success.

It will help her a great deal that one of her best friends is to be a guest at one of the big Newport houses next month, and the girl will be included in some of the invitations. To be at the Pier and know no one in Newport is distinctly a sign of "not being in it."

It's really funny—the colonies that cluster around Newport at its back door, so to speak. There are Jamestown and Saunderstown in particular, both of which despise the Four Hundred and affect the simple life because they can't afford the other.

When you can't splurge it is just as well to call it vulgar, and I have met people at Jamestown so refined that they reminded me of evaporated peaches—there was so little left of them.

The Women In White.

How well dressed a woman can be if she sticks entirely to white is being proved by a young matron here. In the morning she wears embroidered linen dresses made with the finest of guimpes. In the afternoon mull gowns are combined with wonderful picture hats with white chiffon strings and fluffy lingerie parasols. In the evening messalines, chiffon volles and exquisite laces set off her clear complexion and lovely hair. But everything is in the same spotless ivory white.

Useless to say, her numerous changes keep her maid and laundress busy all the time, for white, to be effective, must be as pure as the driven snow.

An Effective Fabric.

I notice many "cloth of gold" long coats are being worn in the daytime. This was the case at several fashionable weddings I attended in town. Cloth of gold is a heavy variety of pongee pale tan in color. To be smart for afternoon wear the coat should be absolutely tailor made, with a touch of black at the collar and cuffs, the sleeves being long, by the way.

Every smart woman is wearing a white lace veil.

These are practical. Let me tell you why. White tulle is 35 cents a yard in the damp proof quality. It takes a yard and a half to go around the enormous sailors every one is wearing, and you can't use the same veil more than three times.

Lace veils can be had for as low as 95 cents, and you can wash them as often as you like, putting a little gum arabic in the rinsing water and drying on the window pane. Yes, I know it looks horrid from the outside of the house, but it is so convenient.

Smart women wear a white lace veil.

Speaking of large sailors, you ought to see a big white sailor that was worn at the Casino the other day. It was of chip with a taffeta edge, and the trimming was of white marabou tipped with bits of peacock feathers, very small bits, of course, that glistened here and there in the sunlight.

A hat of this sort is simple, but you can wear it most anywhere. By the way, here's a new fad: When you are all dressed in white, purse, shoes and all, put a white kid collar on your bull pup to match. The collars are stunning studded with silver nail heads or near-silver if you don't care enough for the dog to give him the real article.

Anyway, the white collar will show people that you are up to date, and that's such a comfort!

Kate Clyde

Narragansett Pier.

A YOUNG MODEL WHO IS A GREAT FAVORITE IN NEW YORK STUDIOS.

JAPANESE CHILDREN.

Children are children all the world over, and nowhere perhaps are they so much petted as in Japan, where their parents love to dress them in the daintiest garments and to indulge them with endless toys and games. March 3 and May 5 are days given over to the children of Japan, when the streets are full of them. Crowds of little girls play at battledore and shuttlecock, and the little boys busy themselves with top fights in which one boy spins his wooden top and his antagonist throws his top to strike the spinning top. Other boys fly all sorts of magnificent kites, some measuring two feet square across and all more or less resplendent as to coloring.

Many are the games dear to the merry little brown children. There is the "hunting" game, grasshopper hunting, gold fish playing and blowing soap bubbles.

The special festival for the little girls is called "Hina Matsure," the feast of dolls, when the shops are gay with dolls only procurable at this time of year. In every family are numbers of splendid dolls, which are handed down from generation to generation. Some of the "Hina" are made of wood and represent historical personages, and on this feast day the girls play with wonderful models of elaborate furniture and a Japanese lady's toilet articles.

The boys' "feast of flags" is somewhat similar. They play with doll effigies of soldiers and generals and all kinds of miniature armor and flags.

Toys are cheap in Japan and are chiefly made of lacquered wood and paper. And as for the sweetmeats, they are endless in variety, and candy, sugar peas, batter cakes and sugar jellies all appeal to the happy little Jap as much as chocolates do to the English child.

COOKING AN EGG.

Her companion had not learned quite so many things and was quite satisfied with her egg. She only murmured softly:

"I never heard of an egg boiled in cold water, did you?"

"It is high time you were introduced to this institution," her wise friend continued, "and I am delighted to illuminate you even at the risk of arousing more of your sarcasm. An egg to be boiled properly for human consumption should be put in cold water and then placed over the fire; then it cooks with the water. The egg cooks, moreover, thoroughly and from the inside.

"Ask a physician or a trained nurse how to boil an egg so that its greatest nutriment and flavor shall be preserved. Either of them will tell you to put it in cold water. The old way of dropping the egg into boiling water has long been given up. It cooks the egg suddenly and destroys its flavor."

GROWING UP.

Slender young maiden, demure and fair,
There is this I should like to know—
What have you done with the little one
With the round brown face and tumbled hair
Whom I loved in the long ago?

So prim you stand in your girlish grace;
The glow of your still, gray eyes
Lights up the curves of your oval face
With twin lamps, unchanging, wise.

The little girl with tangled tresses
Whom I knew in days of yore
Had shoes untied and crumpled dresses
And ink on her pinafore.

But you as you stand and look at me
In your trim, neat gown of gray
Are—well, just all that you ought to be
As a sweet young girl today!

Yet, grave eyed maiden demure and fair—
'Tis think how children grow!
My fancy plays round the baby days
And the round brown face and tumbled hair
That I loved in the long ago.

—M. Forrest.